

# The Human Side

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES • WINTER 2003

The Georgia Department of Human Resources, in partnership with others, will effectively deliver compassionate, innovative, and accountable services to individuals, families and communities.

## New Leadership

**M**aria Greene, director of the Division of Aging Services (DAS), was appointed



acting DHR commissioner by the Board of Human Resources at its November 19 meeting. Commissioner **Jim Martin** announced his resignation in September and left office on November 25. A new commissioner is expected to be chosen by the end of the year.

Greene has headed DAS since August 2000, after serving for five years as executive director of the Georgia Council on Aging. She has also lobbied in behalf of the Coalition of Advocates for Georgia's Elderly, and served on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Long-Term Care and the Older Americans Act work group of the

Southern Governors' Association. After graduating from Valdosta State University she earned a master's degree in human resources management and a graduate certificate in gerontology from Georgia State University.

On November 17, Governor Perdue appointed **Janet Oliva, Ph.D.**, director of the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS).

Oliva comes to DFCS from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, where she served since 1987 as special agent in charge of the bureau's Child Abuse Investigative Support Center. At her appointment ceremony, the Governor said of Oliva, "She really has a team excited about a very important job...one of the most important jobs...protecting our children."



## Board of Human Resources: 14 new members

The Board of Human Resources sets policy for DHR and approves the department's goals and objectives. Members are appointed by the governor to four-year terms. This fall, Governor Perdue appointed 14 new members to replace those whose terms had expired. Three members appointed before 2003 are still serving: Lillian Darden (secretary), Lawrence Cooper, M.D., and James F. Fleming.

Georgia law requires that the board include at least one member from each of Georgia's congressional districts and at least five physicians. You can read a short biography of each board member and see their photographs on the DHR home page: [www.dhr.georgia.gov](http://www.dhr.georgia.gov). Click on "About us," "Executive Leadership," and "Board of Human Resources."

## The Portal Project

A new way to use the web

DHR's home page on the Internet has changed dramatically during the past year and a half.

The address changed to [www.dhr.georgia.gov](http://www.dhr.georgia.gov), and the design now harmonizes with the new State of Georgia portal, [georgia.gov](http://georgia.gov). But more important, DHR's web managers are adding additional elements that reflect a new goal: To turn our corner of the Internet into a "portal" — a wide-open doorway to our services and information, that anyone can use.

The portal concept is being adopted by all departments of our state government, and implemented through the Georgia Technology Authority. Eventually all state public information and services will be available on the Internet through the [georgia.gov](http://georgia.gov) site.

"We want to plan our Web pages based on 'communities of interest,'

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# Getting Ready For The Next Influenza Pandemic

Every year, influenza viruses circulate worldwide. In the United States, flu causes illness in 10 to 20 percent of the population each year and is associated with an average of 114,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths. Influenza viruses change a little every year, but sometimes there is a sudden large change in the virus. This may make a vaccine ineffective and enable the virus to spread easily from person to person, cause widespread illness, and result in a "pandemic" — an epidemic over a wide geographic area.

There were three influenza pandemics in the last century. You may have heard of the Spanish Flu of 1918-1919. It killed more than 500,000 people in the United States and 20-50 million people worldwide. In the 1950s and 1960's, Asian Flu and Hong Kong Flu caused milder pandemics. While there have been threats of a pandemic in more recent years, no flu outbreaks have yet reached that scale.

It is important for us to be prepared. Pandemic influenza would not only profoundly overwhelm healthcare systems, but would also affect all aspects of life, including social services and the economy. The world caught a recent glimpse of this specter with the emergence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003.

In November, Georgia hosted a statewide pandemic influenza tabletop exercise, involving hundreds of people from Georgia and other states. As a part of this, each of the participating public health districts was asked to host its own exercise with its own partners,

focused on its community's needs. The district exercises were particularly important because in a real-



life pandemic, which can strike a whole state, nation, or the entire world, outside help may no longer be available and local communities may have to rely largely on their own resources.

Planning for the exercise began in early 2003. The planning committee included representatives from the Division of Public Health; district health offices; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Georgia Hospital Association; American Red Cross; and Georgia Tech Research Institute.

This exercise brought a wide spectrum of community partners together with Public Health, including hospitals, emergency medical services, public safety agencies, mortuary services, and schools, to discuss emergency planning and response. This was a rare opportunity for partners who may not have worked together before to share ideas, generate questions, improve planning and coordination, and network.

At the end of the day, participants walked away knowing there was still much work to be done. It was the first of many such exercises

that will help us prepare for pandemic influenza or any other major health threat affecting all Georgians.

— Alison Han

*Joy Wells (standing), director of health assessment for Public Health district 3-1 (Cobb-Douglas), talks with other staff from her district at an influenza pandemic planning exercise: (l to r) Mark Bishop, Judy Masching, Tamara Marsh.*

## Update: Overcoming Language Barriers

Georgia is home to an increasing number of people born outside the USA, who enrich our communities and contribute to our economic growth. Georgia is among the top ten states in its rate of immigrant growth and is number one in the rate of growth among Hispanics. Approximately 751,438 people over the age of five speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census 2000).

State agencies such as DHR are challenged by this diversity and are developing resources for serving clients whose language and culture may be different from English and mainstream American culture. Adding to the challenge are laws such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166, which require recipients of federal funds to take reasonable steps to provide LEP customers with meaningful access to services.

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# Overcoming Language Barriers

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Responding to the need, last January DHR established the Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Sensory Impaired (SI) Client Services Program to implement DHR's LEP/SI Plan, which the Office of Civil Rights approved in July 2002.

**Gail Hoffman**, LEP/SI coordinator, and **Antonio Flores**, community outreach specialist, work with a newly formed Language Access Team made up of 17 representatives of DHR's divisions and offices; a problem resolution team of policy specialists; and over 300 client language services coordinators at the county and regional levels. In the near future a citizens' advisory board and speakers bureau comprised of representatives from a variety of ethnic groups will be added to the LEP/SI team.

After studying the need for services and existing resources, DHR

began a statewide effort to recruit qualified and certified interpreters speaking a variety of languages. Over 300 bilingual and multilingual individuals have been recruited thus far.

After careful screening involving interpreter training and orientation, language skills assessment, and criminal background checks, interpreters' names and contact information are entered into an Internet-based language bank, which will be available to DHR's divisions and offices by January 1. By creating our own bank of qualified and certified interpreters who agree to charge reasonable rates, we will avoid the high administrative fees charged by language contractors.

We are working with the City of Atlanta's Workforce Development Agency and Dalton State College

to design comprehensive training programs that prepare interpreters to work in social service, medical, public safety and courtroom situations.

If you have questions about this new effort to serve LEP and SI clients, please contact Gail A. Hoffman at 404/657-5244 or [gahoffman@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:gahoffman@dhr.state.ga.us).

We encourage anyone interested in becoming an interpreter to complete an application on [www.dhrjobs.com](http://www.dhrjobs.com).



**Antonio Flores (left) and Gail A. Hoffman (right) telling previously trained interpreters from four continents about DHR services.**

— Gail A. Hoffman

## Cancer Video Wins Award

The documentary "An Important Conversation - Georgia Speaks," developed for the Division of Public Health's Cancer Awareness and Education Campaign, won a Phoenix Award from the Public Relations Society of America's Georgia Chapter.

This documentary creatively emphasizes the need for early detection of cancer and advises viewers to be proactive and take control of their lives by getting regular medical examinations and screenings. **Kathleen Toomey, MD, MPH**, Division of Public Health director; **Kimberly Redding, MD, MPH**, Cancer Control Section medical director; **Demetrius Parker**, Cancer Control Section media relations manager; and the president of the Georgia Cancer Coalition talk about their roles in Georgia's fight against cancer, and describe cancer screening and treatment services. Several cancer survivors from different parts of the state discuss the importance of early detection, based on their own experiences.

Complimentary copies were sent to each health district and county health department in Georgia. If you did not receive a copy you can request one from [cancercontrol@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:cancercontrol@dhr.state.ga.us). Additional copies cost \$7. Brochures and posters developed by the Cancer Awareness and Education Campaign are available at no cost from DHR Central Supply.

You can view the video online. If you have Windows Media Player go to: <http://167.193.144.238/georgia%20speaks.aspx> If you have Real Player go to: <http://167.193.144.200:8080/ramgen/georgia/speaks/georgiaspeaks.rm>



— Lisa Moery

**Kathleen Toomey, MD, MPH**, director, Division of Public Health, being filmed for "An Important Conversation."

## Finding New Ways to Meet Needs

Creative county Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) staff are finding ways to help families get through hard times. **Sharon Herbert**, a community resource specialist with Fayette County, launched two programs during the past year so low-income parents can keep their children in diapers and school clothes. She did this by motivating community volunteers to donate their time and resources.

School officials had called her

to report that some students were coming to school in worn-out clothes or the same outfit each day. Her answer: Project Appropriate



*ACFASC partners Jeannine Frizzell and her granddaughter enjoy shopping for children.*

Clothing for All School Children, or ACFASC (pronounced "act fast").

When a school official or social service agency calls DFCS to request clothing for a child, Herbert matches the child with an ACFASC partner from the community who buys the clothes or contributes money so a DFCS worker can buy the clothes. The partner will know only the child's first name, age and clothing needs. Partners can be individuals, families, businesses, civic organizations or faith-based groups.

Since ACFASC began in May, 28 partners have clothed 30 children. "Children who need clothing for school should be able to get it quickly with as little red tape as possible," says Herbert. "So, we act fast."

While children are still in diapers their parents will soon be able to turn to Herbert's other program, "Bottoms Up." She is distributing 50 decorated boxes for placement in businesses and other public locations around the county, with instructions, cards and a wooden tree in each. Cards are to be hung from the tree limbs and list baby items that a specific family needs. Donors can write their address and phone numbers on the back of the card so Herbert will know who to thank. Many donors include a personal note for the family.

Clients at Fayette Senior Services, church members and DFCS staff are decorating the boxes with lace and ribbons. "They are totally awesome," says Herbert. "The seniors put so much love and care into their boxes. I am on cloud nine!"

— *Barbara Joye, based in part on articles by Abby G. Brunks of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

## Sears Dream Campaign Helps Foster Kids

**Michael Cohen**, a social services consultant with DFCS' Placement Resource Development Unit, has turned his dream into reality. With more and more children coming into foster care, that dream will have some very practical benefits for the generous people who become foster parents to Georgia's kids.

Michael contacted leaders at Sears in Chicago, and helped to bring their "American Dream Campaign" to Georgia, in partnership with DFCS. Thousands of the state's foster families will receive discount coupons for a variety of merchandise lines at Sears stores around the state. The program got a great kick-off in August, with Governor Sonny Perdue and First Lady Mary Perdue at Sears in Columbus.

The campaign is a multi-year, multi-million dollar community outreach initiative designed to help people overcome the barriers to home ownership, as well as outfit and maintain their homes and families.

Because Sears values the families who are willing to take foster children into care, they wanted to help by providing American Dream Campaign coupon books, valid at any Sears store in Georgia through mid-December — perfect timing as the school year began and as the season changed. The coupon books were distributed to the 159 county DFCS offices across Georgia, who in turn sent them to approximately 3,500 foster families.

The coupon book is exclusive to Georgia's families who open their homes to foster children and young adults, helping to pay for the children's clothing and creating a more comfortable environment for them.

Now that the Sears partnership is rolling, Michael is looking for more corporate and community partnerships to benefit Georgia's foster families. Knowing Michael's determination, we have no doubt he'll find them!

— *Elizabeth Wilson*

## The Portal Project

*Continued from Page 1*



people with common needs, not around agencies and programs or even departments," says

Diane Scott, director of DHR's Portal Office. "For example, parents might be one community of interest. They may want to know about childcare, birth certificates, school registration, immunization records, or recreation programs."

From our home page, all DHR information will be organized by subject and use, to make finding your way around as simple as possible. All division and office pages will be organized along the same lines with a consistent look and feel, although they can reflect unique features. Content will be written and updated by subject matter experts in each program.

In addition to content, the Portal Office is overseeing the development of web-based applications, starting with "Where's My Child's Check?" This interactive application allows custodial parents to check the status of their last six child support payments online, using a personal identification number.

Since the debut of "Where's My Child's Check?" in October 2002, usage grew rapidly to approximately 62,000 hits by May 2003, and payment-related calls to staff declined.

Because of its success, "Where's My Child's Check" is being expanded to meet more needs in the Constituent Services Portal Project. This will enable both custodial and non-custodial

## Child Support Collections Hit New Record

DHR has continued to increase child support collections, even in a period of high unemployment and budget cutbacks. Collections reached a record \$523.7 last year, according to Robert Riddle, director of the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE).

"OCSE managed to collect \$523,746,228 in fiscal year 2003 despite the fact that we had fewer staff," says Riddle. "This is more than six percent above the approximately \$491.7 million we collected in fiscal year 2002. OCSE sends the money directly to the custodial parents. For many of these families, this money is the difference between receiving welfare and being self-sufficient."

Over 29 percent of Georgia's children receive child support through the efforts of OCSE staff, who help custodial parents obtain court orders and collect the payments. OCSE also distributes support payments for a smaller number of parents who did not require

state help to establish their cases. A total of approximately 394,500 noncustodial parents with child support cases made payments to Georgia's child support agency in fiscal year 2003, benefiting some 624,000 children, according to Riddle.

Legislation allows DHR to collect overdue child support directly from tax refund checks, lottery winnings and worker's compensation settlements, as well as salary checks going to noncustodial parents who are under court order to pay. Parents more than two months in arrears may have their driver's license or professional license suspended.

Custodial parents may apply to any OCSE office for help finding an absent parent, establishing paternity, getting a court order, collecting support and enforcing payment through legal remedies. The fee is \$25 for everyone except TANF recipients, who pay nothing.

— Barbara Joye

parents to view payment history, check the status of their case, apply for child support enforcement services, make child support payments, and update their address and employer information.

The Portal Office's Quick Hits Application Project aims to add 19 new applications to the portal during the next year. Georgians will be able to: locate mental health, developmental disability and addictive disease facilities in Georgia; submit comments about DHR-regulated facilities, such as a nursing home; renew their Emergency Medical Technician license; locate a cancer treatment provider; build and sub-

mit a resume online to apply for a DHR position; and apply for a criminal record check. The project will also allow DHR staff working with foster care recruitment, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, HIV prevention and GeorgiaCares programs to simplify their reporting and tracking methods.

Eventually, this creative use of technology should reduce the time we need to spend answering requests for information, help us respond more quickly and efficiently to meet customer needs, and increase customer satisfaction.

— Barbara Joye



## Who's News

### Waycross Office of Child Support Enforcement staff

received a certificate of appreciation from the 1186th Transportation Terminal Brigade for their gift of snacks, games, personal care items and reading material to the brigade members stationed in Kuwait. It read: "The generosity and caring attitude of your employees, to ensure that the soldiers received a 'taste of home' while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom, is notably admirable and greatly appreciated. It is truly a reflection of your patriotism."



Back row, l to r: **Rhonda Mullis, Sandra Arnold, Ellen Selph, Susan Strickland, Sabrina Pharmes, Margaret Rhoden.** Front row, l to r: **Brenda Nail, JoAnne Floyd, Melinda Lee, 1st Sgt. William P. (Billy) Miles, Eunice Miles, Latrell Martin, Lynn Johns.** Not shown: **Anita Thomas, Deanna Jacobs, Elaine Hickson, Rhonda Swinea, Tammy Hickox, Tammy Tyre, KayBuie.** Sgt. Miles is Eunice Miles' husband.

The Georgia Public Health Association again honored several Division of Public Health employees at its annual conference in September:

- Jules S. Terry Memorial Award for increasing access to health care services: **Linda B. Hubbard, R.N., B.S.N., M.S.N.**, District 5-2 (Macon) nursing director.
- Al Dohany Award for Community Service: **Pat Hand**, nurse manager, Lanier County Health Department.
- Primary Health Care Leadership: **Elsie P. Brown**, Primary Health Care Association, Atlanta.
- Environmentalist of the Year: **Leslie Freymann**, program consultant, Environmental Health Office, Atlanta.
- Georgia Dental Public Health Award of Merit: **Sherrill P. Moore, R.D.H.**, dental hygienist, Macon-Bibb County Health Department.
- Janet Stancliff (Epidemiology Section): **Misti Gentry**, program associate, Bartow County Health Department.
- Nutrition Section "Extra Mile": **Gail Dodrner, R.D., L.D., C.L.C.**, nutritionist, Southwest Health District 8-2/
- Barfield Papers (Nursing Section): **Maria Floyd, R.N. C.L.C.**, public health nurse specialist, Bartow County Health Department.
- Maggie Kline Award for nursing: **Alice Rodman, R.N.**, nurse program specialist, Dougherty County Health Department.
- Maternal and Child Health Community Service: **Joseph L. Joyave, M.D.**, pediatrician, AGC Pediatrics, L.L.C., Calhoun.
- Office Personnel Outstanding Service: **Joanna Aflague**, program associate, Bartow County Health Department.

**Sylvia Kidd Swiney**, director of the Office of Adoptions, recently strutted down the runway as one of ten women selected nationally to participate in the ORTHO Evra Every Woman Fashion Show, which was held this September in New York. Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical, Inc. chose Swiney



and nine other women from 1,370 entries, based on their inner beauty, personal style, leadership, and achievement. "Truly beautiful women rely upon inner strength rather than external factors in determining what makes them beautiful," commented Swiney. See [www.everywomanfashion.com](http://www.everywomanfashion.com).



*"TEAM DHR" Shown (l to r):* **Natare Karitanyi, Euriah Waymon, Doris Clanton, Angel Rodriguez, Lynn Sims, Martin Rotter, Hans Hammer, Janet Roorbach, Karen Bacheller, Pat Tucker, Regina Merrell, Jennifer Shew, Penny Blackford, Ray Shindler, William Wheeler, Rick Wingo.**

Members of **Team DHR** invoked the department logo for inspiration just before they set off to compete with 20,000 other people in Promina's Corporate Run/Walk and Fitness Program held this September. They covered 5k (about 3.1 miles), starting from and finishing at Turner Field in downtown Atlanta.

About 50 DHR staff took part, from all divisions and offices. Participants start by enrolling in ten weeks of training. Some of the proceeds from the race benefit two charities, The Atlanta Braves Foundation and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta. Team co-captains **Harvey Nation** and **Rick Wingo** say "we hope for an even bigger team next year."

**E**arnestine Pittman was named Regional Coordinator of the Year at the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse (MHDDAD) annual consumer conference. She is coordinator of the Metro Region. Jean Toole of Community Friend-

ship was named MHDDAD Provider of the Year.



**R**osemary Donnelly, M.S.N., A.P.R.N.-B.C., an AIDS Certified Registered Nurse (ACRN)

and state nurse consultant for Public Health's STD/HIV Program, was named ACRN of the year by the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, a national award.



## What's News

### World AIDS Day

**T**he Division of Public Health observed World AIDS Day on December 1 by encouraging the faith community and other organizations to create compassionate local partnerships to help people living with AIDS and to reduce the stigma and discrimination too often associated with HIV/AIDS. For the second year in a row the day's theme was "Live and let live." Activities around the state included candle-light vigils, health



fairs, free HIV testing, and distributing red ribbons and stickers. Georgia still has the eighth highest number of AIDS cases in the nation.



**T**wo substance abuse prevention programs funded by MHD-DAD received an Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Award for Innovative Programs for 2002: The statewide Drugs Don't Work in Georgia program and the School

and Family Effort program of the DeKalb County school system. The award is sponsored by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America and two federal agencies: the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CASAP) and the National Prevention Network. The two award-winning programs participated in CASAP's "Service-to-Science" study of ways to base substance abuse prevention programs on scientific evidence.







Three DHR offices have won significant federal cash awards for high performance. DFCS won a \$4.4 million federal High Performance Bonus for improvement in helping recipients find employment and the percentage of eligible children served in subsidized childcare.

The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) received \$12 million in incentives, based on the program's achievements during federal fiscal year 2002. OCSE's award is the twelfth highest in the nation for child support services.

In partnership with DFCS, the Office of Adoptions received a Federal Adoption Incentive Grant Award of \$374,000 for increasing the number of adoptions finalized in FY '02. The Office of Adoptions received the eleventh highest award in the nation for adoption services.

It also received the Adoption Exchange Association's award for best segment on the "Wednesday's Child" television program that features children awaiting adoption.



DHR's annual charity drive featured plenty of creative events, including the Family Health Branch's costume party and sale at Two Peachtree Street in Atlanta. Two visitors from a sister state government showed up: The California governor's election ballot and Governor Arnold himself (represented by Katherine Otto (l) and Lyn Thafvelin (r), both of Infant and Child Health Services).



## Having Fun Doing Good



Dennis Yarman's final achievement before he retired as director of the Office of Human Resource Development was to coordinate the 2003 charity drive. He made a special contribution by organizing DHR's first golf tournament, in collaboration with Central State Hospital (CSH). About 40 golfers competed in Milledgeville in October, raising \$2,500. Shown:

(l to r) Carlton Bloodworth, Central State Hospital (CSH) safety officer; Dennis Yarman; Marvin Bailey, CSH director; and a Wal-Mart executive, with WalMart's contribution.



The purpose of The Human Side is to provide interesting and important information related to DHR employees and their jobs.

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